

**TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP, VIRGINIA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
505 E 5th STREET S
BIG STONE GAP, VA**

April 13, 2021

6:30 PM

AGENDA ITEM 1

Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order.

Those Present: Hon. Gary Johnson, Mayor
 Hon. Nancy Bailey, Vice-Mayor
 Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman
 Hon. Kent Gilley, Councilman
 Hon. Tyler Hughes, Councilman
 Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman
 Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman

Staff Present: Mr. Stephen Lawson, Town Manager
 Ms. Amanda L. Hawkins, Town Clerk/Treasurer
 Mr. Steve Hamm, Chief of Police

Those Absent: Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney

AGENDA ITEM 2

INVOCATION by Councilman Aaron McKinney.

AGENDA ITEM 3

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA ITEM 4

ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Lyke, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of April 13, 2021 be adopted as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

**Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: None**

AGENDA ITEM 5

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

No comments.

AGENDA ITEM 6**GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- a. **Approval of minutes of Council Workshop of March 2, 2021.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- b. **Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting (Electronic) of March 9, 2021.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- c. **Departmental Reports for the month of March 2021.**
Recommended Action: Received and filed.
- d. **Treasurer's Reports for the month of February 2021.**
Recommended Action: Received and filed.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Lyke, that the General Order of Business be approved as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

AGENDA ITEM 7**TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT**

Mr. Broskey was absent due to a family commitment. Mr. Lawson said there were no updates to the Engineer's report but he would like to report on the proposed Big Cherry Trail.

Big Cherry Trail

Mr. Lawson said he, Jon Broskey, and Gary Harris went to Big Cherry and mapped out a preliminary 1.2 mile trail from Devil's Bathtub Loop to the Big Cherry Trail. They identified a location for a fishing pier, three fishing spots, and a couple of tree houses. He noted they should have quotes back in the next two weeks. He said it is very important to get the map done first so we will be ready to be part of the Cloudsplitter race in Norton as soon as possible, hopefully this year.

He said they also discovered a beaver problem on the back side of the lake that will causing issues for this trail.

He said we will also apply for a smaller grant to put in steps and a campsite for the Maple's Gap Overlook Trail.

AGENDA ITEM 8**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

- a. **Budget Amendment FY2020-21 – CARES Act Funds and Additional Resources**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this amendment to increase the FY2020-21 revenue and expenses for the General Fund by \$462,278, Water Fund by \$139,550, and Sewer Fund by \$104,900, for a total of \$706,728.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve a Budget Amendment to the FY2020-21 budget to increase General Fund revenues and expenses by \$462,278, Water

Fund revenues and expenses by \$139,550, and Sewer Fund revenues and expenses by \$104,900, for a total amendment of \$706,728. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: None

b. Parade Permit – Union Little League

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this permit for the Little League to have a parade on Saturday, April 10th, at 10 am to celebrate Opening Day.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hughes, that Council approve a Parade Permit for the Opening Day of the Union Little League on April 10, 2021 at 10:00 am. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: None

c. Resolution 02-2021 – Effectuate Temporary Changes COVID-19

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to allow electronic meetings to continue thru October, 2021.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve Resolution 02-2021 being a resolution to effectuate temporary changes in certain deadlines and to modify public meeting and public hearing practices and procedures to address continuity of operations associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic Disaster. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: None

d. Resolution 03-2021 – Authorizing Water & Wastewater Refunding of \$4,475,000

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution authorizing the refinancing of \$4,475,000 in bonds.

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Hughes, that Council approve Resolution 03-2021 being a resolution authorizing the issuance of approximately \$4,475,000 principal amount of one or more series of water and wastewater revenue refunding bonds of the Town of Big Stone Gap, Virginia and providing for the form, details and payment thereof. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: None

e. Resolution 04-2021 – Reduction of the Interest Rate on a Certain Bond

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution that will provide for a reduction of interest rate on a certain bond.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Resolution 04-2021 being a resolution providing for the reduction of the interest rate of a certain outstanding bond and other actions related thereto. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

f. Proclamation – Designate April 2021 as Fair Housing Month

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this proclamation designating April as Fair Housing Month.

Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve a proclamation designating April 2021 as Fair Housing Month. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

g. Proclamation – Honor Thomas Potter State Wrestling Championship

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this proclamation honoring Thomas Potter for winning the State Wrestling Championship.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve a proclamation honoring Thomas Potter for winning the 2021 Class 2 State Wrestling Championship in the 145-pound weight class. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

h. Proclamation – Honor UHS Boys’ Basketball State Championship

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this proclamation honoring the Union High School Boys’ Basketball Team for winning the Class 2 State Championship.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a proclamation recognizing the Union High School Boys’ Basketball Team, Coaching Staff, and support personnel for winning the 2021 Boys’ Class 2 Basketball State Championship. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

i. Proclamation – Grand Opening of Jasmine Cottage

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this proclamation recognizing the Jasmine Cottage as a new business in Town.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve a proclamation recognizing and welcoming The Jasmine Cottage and Jessica and Chris Smith located at 305 Shawnee Ave E. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

j. COVID-19 & Projects Update

Mr. Lawson said the Planning Commission is preparing a letter to Old Dominion Power Company with questions and comments regarding the Special Use Permit they requested to install a high-voltage power line thru Town.

He said we have received estimates for paving repairs for road cuts and potholes. Boyd's Construction and Little Henry's Excavating both submitted bids for the work and a decision will be made shortly.

Mr. Lawson said a new business called Mr. Automotive is in the old Coughlin building across from O'Reilly's Auto Parts.

He said we will start work on the upper end of Big Cherry road to make repairs that we didn't get to last year. John Browning will continue to do the regular maintenance on the road.

Mr. Lawson said we had received three quotes on replacing the roof on the Coal Museum. Rafael Martinez is the low bidder but we are looking at other specs before making a decision.

He said Pro-Art Association will submit a drawing of the mural they want to be installed along the Greenbelt. He said he hopes to present that request at the May workshop.

He said that Mayor Johnson has suggested having Kid's Fishing Day on Memorial Day weekend this year.

Mr. Lawson said we will close on the Wells Fargo building by the end of the week. There are still a few items inside that we assume they did not want to take with them that we may be able to put to good use.

He said we are asking for bids for constructing a 50 x 75 building behind Town Hall for Parks & Recreation's use in storing equipment.

Saturday was opening day for Little League. Directly after that event, we had about 40 Mini Coopers in Town for a Backroads of Appalachia event. We closed off 3rd Street for them to line up their cars. After eating at Curklin's, they asked Mr. Lawson if next year we could block off the main street and host an even bigger event with a party. Mr. Lawson said we would certainly talk about the idea.

Mr. Lawson said we are planning our Fourth of July festivities. Fireworks have been ordered and we are planning a 10% bigger show than last year. He said some local bands are interested in playing and he asked for Council's input on performers.

Mr. Lawson said they had asked the Little League to leave the fields open for two days a week and a couple of weekends a month for other teams to use. Their current schedule is Monday-Thursday. We have contacted several girls' softball teams to try to organize some tournaments this summer. We have advertised that we are open for a tournament on May 22nd. Little League season is eight weeks long leaving the fields open for travel ball from June to November. Mr. Lawson said one of our priorities is accommodating the Little League schedules, while at the same time by no means hindering travel ball tournaments. We are

saving room for tournaments on Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, and a weekend in October. He said he would like to see players in costume for the October tournament.

Mayor Johnson said he was surprised when talking to travel ball organizers that they are already scheduled for the year.

Ms. Lyke commented that travel ball starts with Little League, and many families whose kids play Little League cannot afford the expense of travel ball.

AGENDA ITEM 9 COMMITTEE REPORTS

No reports. Mayor Johnson asked Ms. Hawkins if a Public Property Committee meeting had been set. Ms. Hawkins said Gayle Shorter's Bland Reunion Group wants to add Oakview Cemetery to their proposed African American Heritage Trail signage project, and Sandra Jones made a donation toward benches to be placed in Oakview Cemetery. Ms. Hawkins said she is drafting a letter to Ms. Shorter and Ms. Jones to invite them to attend the Public Property Committee meeting so both projects can be discussed together, and will notify Council as soon as a meeting is set.

AGENDA ITEM 10 COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Mr. Bloomer said he does not want to take anything away from the Little League but we need tournaments as well.

Mr. Gilley thanked the Police Department and Todd Hill in particular for their assistance.

Mr. Hughes said he is glad to be here and thanked all of the employees.

Mrs. Bailey reminded everyone that this is Child Abuse Prevention month. She said that Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC) finally got their pinwheels in and thanked the Parks & Recreation department for their help in distributing them throughout Town.

Mayor Johnson said it's good to be together again for the meeting. He wished good luck for both football teams (Union and Central) on Friday's game.

AGENDA ITEM 11 CLOSED SESSION in accordance with VA Code 2.2-3711(A)(3) for the discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Lyke, that Council enter a closed session in accordance with VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) for the discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

(Motion to Reconvene into Open Session)

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bailey, that Council reconvene into open session. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

(Certification of Closed Meeting)

Ms. Hawkins read the Certification of Closed Meeting. Roll call vote resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

**AGENDA ITEM 12
ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that the meeting be adjourned. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm.

Minutes Recorded & Transcribed by
Amanda L. Hawkins–Town Clerk/Treasurer